

**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATEWIDE ACCESS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Technical Advisory Committee Meeting #2

206 S. 17th Avenue, State Transportation Board Room

January 31, 2006

9:30 a.m. – 12 noon

ATTENDING:

Mike Kondelis, ADOT - Kingman District
Chuck Gillick, ADOT - N. Region Traffic
Daniel Williams, ADOT - Tucson District
Dave Edwards, ADOT - Right-of-Way
Bob Miller, ADOT – SPM
Paul O'Brien, ADOT - PreDesign
Reza Karimvand, ADOT - Baja Region Traffic
Donna Jones, ADOT - Permits
Sylvia Hanna, ADOT - Permits
Dale Buskirk, ADOT - TPD

Mike Manthey, ADOT – Traffic
Arnold Burnham, ADOT – TPD
Carol Slaker, ADOT – TPD
Sam Elters, ADOT – State Engineer
Bryan Perry, Attorney General's Office/Transp.
Bob Hazlett, MAG
Ken Davis, FHWA
Luana Capponi, ASLD
Manish Patel, ASLD
Grant Buma, CRIT

Consultants: Rick Ensdruff, Phil Demosthenes, Kristine Williams, Caraly Foreman, Lyndy Long

NOT ATTENDING: Mary Viparina, ADOT - VPM; Reed Henry, ADOT - Traffic; John Harper, ADOT - Flagstaff District; John Pein, ADOT – TPD; Cherie Campbell, PAG; Chris Fetzer, NACOG; Kevin Adam, League of AZ Cities & Towns, Julie Decker – BLM

MEETING MINUTES:

Carol Slaker called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for coming. Introductions were made around the room.

Rick Ensdruff announced that new members had been added to the TAC, including Ken Davis of the FHWA, Jeff Martin from Mesa, and Paul Melcher of the Yuma MPO to help add a local perspective to the group.

Rick Ensdruff reviewed the meeting agenda, which would include a current practice review of what is going on nationally and then within the State of Arizona. The team reviewed other documents and has spoken with six of the nine districts; meetings are planned with the other three districts. We want to know from the District Engineers how things are working for them, or if they are having operational issues. The team has also spoken with the State Traffic Engineer.

Following a review of current practices, we hope to develop a vision statement and objectives that will provide focus as we work on building the program. We will then review the workshops, and would like input from the TAC. An approach has been established, and we will build on that approach with input we have received from the group on number of meetings, location, and who should be attending. Feedback from this meeting will also be incorporated into the Current Practices Report, which will be finalized after discussions with the districts are complete.

Kristine Williams stated that she would be discussing the highlights of current access management practices. The TRB Access Management Manual was recently published and has since been supplemented with additional studies. A common working definition of access management has also been developed to note what is being regulated and what elements are included in the management.

Kristine Williams discussed the systematic process for developing a system-wide access management plan, including developing a hierarchy of access levels, establishing access standards, assigning a classification to each roadway segment, and adopting supporting regulations or procedures. The classification system can be applied to the permitting and roadway improvement process and supplemented with corridor access management plans and agreements. The Colorado classification system was the first program developed and remains the most successful. It has been a good model for many subsequent programs.

Kristine Williams then went on to note the benefits of access management, such as safety, improved mobility, economics, land use/aesthetics, and environmental benefits. These many benefits provide much opportunity for agreement between a cross section of the interested parties. Many of these issues are also addressed in MoveAZ. Benefits are important to consider during outreach, in particular the safety benefits, which have been clearly demonstrated in several documents.

Kristine Williams discussed the state of the practice, which includes issues heard when speaking to the districts. Medians have been compared to roads with left turn lanes and have been found to be about 30 percent safer; some studies show accident reduction of 50 percent or more. Medians reduce the potential number of conflicts or complexities for drivers. Medians are also effective for public safety. The Florida DOT has recognized this as important and adopted a general policy in 1993. Following the adoption of the general policy, they developed a good median handbook.

Acquisition of access rights often lacks dedicated funding, but an opportunistic approach may still be taken (in advance of development). However, you must be careful in describing access so it is not implied. Access permitting should consider if a variance would be allowed or not. The use of access should be clearly outlined in the permit, and there should be a "grandfathering" process or defined points for when a permit condition is enforced. Consistency in permitting is also important, and keys to ensuring consistency include having clear standards, procedures for deviation, frequent staff training to ensure new staff is informed, and continuing outreach programs so other agencies or officials are aware of the policy.

Interchanges were also identified as an issue, specifically safety issues with the light being too close, too many driveways, and interchange failure. An example from Tennessee demonstrates that although they were concerned with local economic impacts associated with access or interchanges, examples showed that economic opportunities were not eliminated. An alternative is to build an internal road network that can handle local traffic more efficiently.

Kristine Williams discussed corridor access management plans, which are effective documents and provide many partnering opportunities. We also heard about this issue at the districts, who wanted to know how to make a living document. The key to this is through agreements such as an IGA or MOU. Corridors, use, and staff change over time so allow for updates, this also helps local governments. She reviewed two examples from Kansas in which local partnerships were made and the DOT worked with local landowners. In addition, the plan influenced future adjacent development. In New Jersey, funding and technical assistance was provided to local governments to build streets to help accommodate traffic.

Kristine Williams reviewed the local access control powers slide. She also provided an example of how Florida managed a frontage plan that served as an overlay applied to existing parcels, but does not prevent parcels from being subdivided.

Grant Buma asked what the amount was of the grants made available to local governments to help get them started with their arterial development. Kristine Williams responded that in Kansas the amount was \$2 million, but sometimes it is a smaller amount such as \$100,000. However, many local governments have applied for grants multiple times.

Reza Karimvand made a point that the Florida DOT is more liberal than the DOT in Colorado. Access management ties in closely with land use and what has been done in Florida may not meet the needs of our state. Rick Ensdorff stated that Colorado has more progressive access management than Florida, especially when combined with their work with local governments, and we refer to Colorado more often than Florida for examples. Kristine Williams added that Colorado is a good model; Florida has had problems but they have a good median policy and local outreach program, even if they are not a perfect model for the entire program.

Kristine Williams added that the reports they researched on interchange crossroads, access synthesis, cooperative agreements, integrated access management/education, policy and planning objectives are on the accessmanagement.gov website.

Grant Buma asked if crash data on access points per mile [slide 11] integrated the number of vehicles. Phil Demosthenes stated that the data included 37,000 crashes, then the data was normalized to provide a generalized index. However, not only does the crash rate go up, towards the end of the chart [as access points per mile increase] the line gets steeper.

Grant Buma noted that California uses numerous medians, and many people say this causes confusion for access. Can a comparison be made between California and Colorado? Phil Demosthenes stated that studies have been done on u-turns, but the key in Colorado is having an arterial network so people can recirculate. Kristine Williams added that numerous medians can be confusing, and in Florida they are redoing their policy to add u-turn opportunities.

Kristine Williams moved on to the ADOT Access Classification System slide. Currently there is no statewide system, but the opportunity to develop one has been provided through policy and MoveAZ. Virgil Stover is currently reviewing access management criteria as we decide what we want to include for design criteria. Criteria is lacking or very general in current documents.

Kristine Williams also reviewed ADOT interchange criteria and permitting issues. There is a lot of experience with permitting at the district level. This issue tends to be open to discretion or political interpretation. In addition, there can be problems with changes in ownership and if that requires a new permit. There are also different problems presented between rural and urban areas.

Dale Buskirk asked if the access management studies discussed during the presentation are consistent in their approach and recommendations. Kristine Williams responded that the more recent reports include additional information on public involvement and local government coordination than the earlier reports; however, many of the reports emphasize acquiring access and building roads. She also stated that access management plans are currently done in the context of a project rather than in a general sense. Key elements of plans (local adoption and implementation) are often not carried through. In addition, local governments do not want to lose their investments due to these plans; we need to make the plans living documents to adapt to changing needs.

Reza Karimvand asked which areas were reviewed during the document review. Kristine Williams responded that SR 74 is a good example that dealt with implementation, IGAs, and coordination. In addition, although 69 is an older study it is a good case study that also incorporated those elements. Dale Buskirk added that the

first access management plan adopted by Yavapai County tried to create a framework for coordination of transportation and land use planning.

Kristine Williams discussed the team's observations on local roles and the responses they received to the inquiry on who is involved in this process. The team found that there are not many ordinances, and there is a great deal of variation in design standards in terms of the level of detail and what is included. Rural areas and cities are not very informed or supportive about access management, but this presents a good outreach and education opportunity. They are interested in workshops. She also reviewed Scottsdale's design standards and emphasized that consistency with local plans would be important.

Dale Buskirk asked where Arizona fit in with the state review and if we have the basis for developing a system. Kristine Williams responded that Arizona is in the middle compared to other states in the review. We have a framework and lots of activity in this area, the state just needs to take the next step. Dale Buskirk clarified that if Arizona incorporates standards, policy, and procedure, we can reach the state of practice without legislative changes. Kristine Williams agreed, stating that policy is in place and the legal foundation is in place. Phil Demosthenes agreed, and said Arizona has a great structure in place. Outreach is critical and should be the next step. Northern Carolina is struggling because the state law mandates direct access for property owners and the agency is the one who has to build the driveways. Kristine Williams added that taking property is always an issue that comes up in access management; however, usually this is not a problem unless bad decisions are made.

Chuck Gillick asked if there is a benefit between a centralized program and decent access plans or programs. There are many differences in rural/urban areas of the state and the approach may need to be different. He asked if the plans approach these areas in the same or different ways. Phil Demosthenes answered that some states have a centralized system and others do not. Some states also have cut-off points based on traffic counts. Colorado is more decentralized than Arizona. Access decisions should be made at the district level. They have local relationships and knowledge of issues, and are able to obtain the necessary support. Kristine Williams added that Florida has consistency problems due to a decentralized system, but the consistency office helps to address those issues and that type of system can work.

Ken Davis stated that in Arizona, access is often not thought about seriously until a challenge is presented, and feels that this project is a good effort. Kristine Williams added that problems in Arizona are exacerbated by high growth. It is not unusual for states to wait until a problem is presented, which is often a function of political issues.

Ken Davis asked when ADOT will identify routes that need better access control. Kristine Williams responded that Phil Demosthenes and Mike Connor will be doing that effort. They will start by identifying routes of statewide importance, then creating a framework with different levels of standards. Dale Buskirk added that some of that information is in the state plan, which provides interconnections with impact and design standards and considers existing and forecast use.

Phil Demosthenes noted that the identification process will be starting next and we will be looking to the TAC and staff for guidance on topics such as when a state highway goes through rural areas and the balance between state and local needs. Bob Miller stated that we need to keep regional highways functional but local residents often see these highways as main streets. We need to determine how to bring local entities to the table in a cooperative manner as these highways are an economic development engine for them.

Kristine Williams responded that access management does not mean that a state highway system cannot develop; it just requires good planning and supporting arterial roads. We also need a good outreach program

as local governments are generally supportive but there can be political challenges. The issues will be different by area but access management is a win/win situation.

Bob Hazlett added that it is important to emphasize flexibility for local areas, and note that there will be opportunities for amendments. Dale Buskirk agreed, and added that the previous challenge has been in the support for and consistency in access management. Local officials need to understand that they are not locked in.

Grant Buma added that there are also enforcement problems, and pointed out that money is required to build supporting arterials. Unfunded mandates are a problem, and he asked how these issues have been solved elsewhere. Bryan Perry stated that local areas do receive a tax base, and Grant Buma stated that local areas still need a plan. Arnold Burnham mentioned that most issues are not with new freeways; we still have the opportunity to foresee and deal with issues associated with new freeways. Phil Demosthenes stated that some developers will pay for studies.

Rick Ensdruff said the next step in the process is to conduct the workshops beginning in the first part of March. We will also start to identify what pieces of the studies we have looked at are relevant for the Arizona plan, begin work on the classification system, and make a presentation to Roads and Streets. Dale Buskirk added that we will present the project to the State Transportation Board at their March meeting, and that their full support is needed. Rick Ensdruff noted that the next TAC meeting would be towards the end of April or first week of May, perhaps May 4.

Sam Elters emphasized the importance of including a funding strategy in the plan. From past experience, as we have moved into implementation, funding has to be presented. We need some sense of successful approaches, and we need to understand if some resources are not readily available. Reza Karimvand added that funding in part has to do with permitting, and noted that Colorado has a mechanism for permitting that allows the permittee to pay costs. He asked how this was funded. Phil Demosthenes replied that the funding was provided through the program, but that it has been reduced.

Dale Buskirk noted that the TAC has good representation from ADOT and regional organizations, but is lacking representatives from local areas. He asked what efforts are being made to gain their participation. Rick Ensdruff responded that a couple of additional members had been added to the TAC to add that perspective, and that we hoped to also reach local entities through the workshops. Lyndy Long added that the District Engineers provide an invaluable local resource, as they are intimately familiar with not only local transportation issues, but other community issues or perceptions of ADOT that will be important to be familiar with as we move into the communities with our outreach program. Bob Miller stated that we need to consult with ADOT's community relations department. Dale Buskirk added that they should be involved in the process. Arnold Burnham emphasized that involving elected officials and getting them at the workshops is important.

Rick Ensdruff then reviewed the workshop structure. There will be five workshops in different parts of the state to begin in the first half of March. The target audience will be agencies, elected officials, and the business and development communities, to be met with in that order. Reza Karimvand said that five workshops is too few, it will be too far for many to drive. Rick Ensdruff agreed that outreach is needed, but we have to balance the question on if we will have problems later due to the number of workshops with the limits on budget and scope of the project.

Arnold Burnham suggested presenting at the Arizona League of Cities and Towns conference to increase project outreach. Luana Capponi noted that there are no workshops near Pinal County or Apache Junction, and inquired on if they had been incorporated into other areas. Bob Miller added that there needs to be

consistency with community partnerships between the materials and messages. We also need to consider how to extend invitations to property owners.

Mike Kondelis stated that we need to consider compliance with the open meeting law when arranging meetings with multiple elected officials. Kristine Williams added that brochures and websites have been successful tools. There could also be a round table for the developers and perhaps their attorneys if the developers want to include them.

Reza Karimvand asked how long the meetings would be. Kristine Williams stated they would be one day, and if travel was an issue it can sometimes be covered through a grant, if requested. Grant Buma stated that if we want to reach the elected officials we need to go to their area. Some officials have open meetings all the time that we could be included in. Dave Edwards added that elected officials do not represent the community, and developers and attorneys do not represent property owners but they do have political clout.

Bryan Perry noted that he will be attending an eminent domain seminar that access management will be discussed at; this could be another opportunity for outreach. Bob Hazlett mentioned that MAG will have opportunities as well.

Dave Edwards noted that the BLM had been a participant on the TAC but that he had retired. Caraly Foreman responded that Julie Decker or another local BLM representative will take his place on the TAC.

Rick Ensdorff moved on to the vision statement and requested the group supply their feedback on the vision statement, which will be used in future presentations. Bob Miller noted that the statement does not recognize local access concerns. Paul O'Brian suggested adding "providing economic viability." Bob Hazlett stated that "flexibility" would be a good word to include. Grant Buma suggested that creating a feeling that ADOT wants to coordinate and create a win/win situation will help in dealing with local entities.

The objectives were reviewed next. Bob Miller said that interchange design spacing is okay for limited access but inquired on other situations and if this is categorized under access spacing. Kristine Williams agreed that terminology will need to be clearly defined. Phil Demosthenes added that access is to or from a roadway, any access management.

Kristine Williams noted that the second objective [slide 57] would include turn lanes also. Ken Davis noted that he has always seen a demarcation between access with private driveways, developments, and public streets. Phil Demosthenes responded that AASHTO treats them the same due to operational issues.

Arnold asked if the fifth objective [slide 57] could be more specific to say highway section. Reza Karimvand asked if access control had any place in the objectives, and Rick Ensdorff said that was included on the next slide. Dave Edwards suggested this would be a good place to add funding and implementation. Rick Ensdorff responded that this could be a separate objective.

Bob Hazlett asked if the objectives were in order of priority, and if not, we may want to use bullets instead of numbers so that perspective is not presented. Rick Ensdorff also mentioned that a bullet may need to be added to address organization responsibility. Phil Demosthenes stated that Colorado moved away from that because responsibilities may be different based on the area. Reza Karimvand agreed that we would not be able to unilaterally assign responsibilities in Arizona.

NEXT STEPS / FUTURE TAC MEETINGS

Members were asked to email additional input on the vision statement and objectives to Carol Slaker.

The next TAC meeting was tentatively scheduled.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.